

HIST 3303 Disease, Health and Medicine in American History

Lecturer: Roberta Bivins

Today in America, medicine and medical understandings of health and disease permeate our daily lives. We pass 'No Smoking' signs, think about 'cutting calories', buy USDA certified meat, and worry about 'germs'. In each of these everyday examples, our environment, choices, and concerns have been shaped by medical arguments and knowledge. Has medicine always played such a visible role in American culture and daily life? How did it become normal for us to think of our bodies and activities in terms of chemicals, calories, and contaminants?

This course offers an introduction to the history of medicine in the United States from the colonial period to the present. It will address themes such as the emergence of a medical profession, the rise of the hospital, the relationship between medicine, science and politics, and the roles of medicine and belief in defining and interpreting bodies, health, and disease. Students will explore these themes through historical documents, secondary sources, and case studies. By the end of this course, students should be able to

- **describe the basic chronology** of medicine in the United States;
- **identify specific events** which shaped the face of medicine as we know it today;
- **identify key medical characteristics** of different historical periods; and
- **address themes** such as professionalization, institutional growth, the relationship between science and medicine, race/gender and medicine, and medicine as a social authority **using specific examples** from each period.

Required Texts (AVAILABLE FROM CAMPUS BOOKSTORE)

Main textbook:

John Harley Warner and Janet Tighe (eds), *Major Problems in the History of American Medicine and Public Health* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

Case-study Textbooks: Regina Morantz-Sanchez, '*Conduct Unbecoming a Woman*': *Medicine on Trial in Turn-of-the-Century Brooklyn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Keith Wailoo, *Dying in the City of the Blues; Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Recommended and Supplementary Texts

General:

Judith Leavitt and Ron Numbers (eds), *Sickness and Health in America* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, various editions).

Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

Case Studies:

Judith Walzer Leavitt, *Typhoid Mary: Captive to the Public's Health* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

James Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*, new edition (New York: Free Press, 1993).

John Ettling, *Germ of Laziness*

Course Mechanics

Contact information:

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Office Hours: Tuesday 5- 6, Thursday 4-5, or by appointment.

All students should meet with me during office hours (or by appointment) **at least once** during the semester, to discuss paper topics and class performance. Attendance will be taken, and participation will be assessed as part of the final grade. The final examination

will draw upon material covered in lectures as well as in the readings. Therefore, students who must miss a lecture should arrange to get notes from another student, or see me.

Readings

This syllabus lists required readings ;(supplementary required readings maybe added on a week by week basis. For each unit, I will provide a set of questions/ themes which you should consider as you read. **You should be prepared to discuss these questions/themes.** All required texts are available from the campus bookstore, and will be put on reserve in the M.D.Anderson Library as they are received. I will keep additional copies, and copies of supplementary readings in my office, should problems arise with the Reserve collection (in other words, the readings WILL be available somewhere, as long as you give yourself sufficient time to read them before lecture!). **If you have find the material difficult, or simply cannot keep up with the required reading, come and talk to me.**

GRADING

45% 8-10 page essay

40% Final Examination

15% Class Participation

Details:

Students will be required to write **one 8-10 page essay worth 45% of the course grade.** Students may choose from a list of topics for which ample material is available in the M.D.Anderson Library. An ‘A’ paper will have a strong and original argument drawn from a variety of sources -- inclusive of, but not limited to material on the reading list. It will also be spell-checked, and grammatical! Students are encouraged to submit drafts. For more about the paper and its assessment, see handout “Writing a strong essay.” **This paper will be due on Tuesday 20th November** -- they will be marked and available for you to see BEFORE our exam; therefore **I will not (under normal circumstances) accept any late papers.**

An exam, worth 40% of the final grade, will test students' knowledge and understanding of the material through essay questions drawing on material from the entire course -- inclusive of lectures and readings. I will distribute a handout on "Writing a strong exam answer," with a sample question and some tips in week 13.

Class performance will determine the residual 15% of your final grade.

Included in this portion of the mark will be

- attendance,
- oral presentation on the week's readings, and
- **an essay outline to be submitted in class on Thursday, 8 November.**

The oral presentation will be done in teams. It should quickly summarize the week's readings, by discussing a) the questions or questions each author is trying to answer in the text; b) describing the author's major arguments; and c) detailing the type of evidence each author puts forward. The student-presenters should then compare the week's readings to each other (if applicable), and offer a critical review of the authors' positions. This presentation should take 10 minutes, and the student-presenters should **each prepare and hand in one page of notes** for the presentation. These notes will be marked and returned to the students.

Class performance is the one part of your final mark over which you have complete control -- as long as you attend, hand in your outline on time, and are prepared for your presentation, your class performance can only raise your final mark. Take advantage of this opportunity to insure against that unexpected exam question, or rushed essay!

Graduate students will be assessed by essay and class performance only.

Graduate essays must be 15 pages, and will contribute 85% of the overall course mark; class performance will remain 15% of the final mark. Graduate essays will be due on the last day of class.

University Policy:

In accordance with the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I will make every effort to reasonably accommodate students who request and require assistance. Please inform me of your needs as soon as possible.

Students are expected to produce and submit their own original work. Allegations of academic dishonesty (e.g. copying during exams, submitting or using the work of others without proper attribution) will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Students should consult the Student Handbook to review their responsibilities and rights regarding academic honesty.

SYLLABUS AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week One: Introduction

Part I. Colonization to the Civil War

Week Two: Medicine in the New World

‘Virgin Soil’ (*Major Problems* Chapter 2)

Medical Pluralism (*Major Problems*, Chapter 3)

Week Three: Medical Belief and Medical Practice

Medical distinctiveness (*Major Problems* Chapter 4)

Monopoly and the Medical Profession (*Major Problems*, Chapter 5)

Week Four: War and Medicine Part I

Efficiency and Institutions (*Major Problems*, Chapter 6)

Medicine, Science and the Public Health (*Major Problems*, Chapter 7)

Part Two. Reconstruction to WWI: Professionalization and Authority

Week Five Case Study 1. From Midwifery to Gynaecology

Medicine and the Public (Morantz-Sanchez, Chapters 1, 8)

Medical Science (Morantz-Sanchez, Chapter 4, Leavitt, ‘Science Enters the Birthing Room’ on Reserve)

Week Six Making women’s bodies (Men’s) work

Women and the Medical Profession: authority and ‘normality’ (Morantz-Sanchez, Chapters 5, 6)

Women in the medical profession: strategies (Morantz-Sanchez, Chapters 3, 9)

Week Seven: Medicine and Public Health

War and Medicine Part II Men’s Bodies (Herschbach, on Reserve)

The Gospel of Hygiene (*Major Problems*, Chapter 8)

Week Eight Case Study 2. Typhoid Mary: Privacy and Public Health

Medical Knowledge in the Home (*Major Problems*, Chapter 10)

Who Was Typhoid Mary? (Leavitt, Chapters 1, and 4 OR 5)

Week Nine (Tues)

Which Public, Whose Health? (Leavitt, Chapter 2-3)

Part 3. Interwar to Present: ‘Scientific Medicine’ and Social Bodies

Week Nine (Thurs) Science and Exclusive Knowledge

Reforming Medical Education(*Major Problems*, Chapter 9)

Week Ten ‘Modernizing’ the Medical Infrastructure

Hospitals and Technology (*Major Problems*, Chapter 11)

Insurance and the State (*Major Problems*, Chapter 13)

Week Eleven (Tues): Experiments, Ethics, and the Patient

Patients, Victims, or ‘Clinical Material’ (*Major Problems*, Chapter 12)

Week Eleven (Thurs) Case Study 3. Sickle Cell Anemia

**‘Discovering’ Disease: the ‘Natural’ History of Sickle Cell Anemia
(Wailoo, Chapter 2)**

Week Twelve Case Study Three (Con’t)

‘Jim Crow’ Medicine (Wailoo, Chapter 3-4)

**Identity Politics and Public Health (Wailoo, Chapters 5-6) OUTLINES
DUE IN CLASS**

Week Thirteen Risk and Responsibility

Medicine, Insurance and the State (*Major Problems*, Chapter 13)

Access and Activism (*Major Problems*, Chapter, 14)

Week Fourteen

MOVIE (TBA) **PAPERS DUE IN CLASS**

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week Fifteen

Culture and the Doctor/Patient Relationship (*Major Problems*, Chapter 15)

Conclusion (NO READING)

Please note that this schedule may be changed; students will be notified of all changes in advance if possible.

Assessment criteria for essays/exam answers (see also ‘Writing a strong essay’)

Format: Essays must be typed/word-processed . They must be either 1.5 or double-spaced, and the font should be 12 point. Margins, headers and footers should not be more than 1.3 inches.

I will assess your written work according to the following criteria:

- 1. empirical coverage of the relevant literature:** Have you drawn upon a wide range of readings, going beyond the lectures and required reading?
- 2. understanding:** Did you grasp the main concepts and arguments presented in readings and lectures?
- 3. structure of the argument:** Is your argument clear, persuasive and insightful? Is it comprehensive? Is it original?
- 4. critical capacity:** Have you spotted the limitations of your sources, and the weaknesses of authors’ arguments, etc.?
- 5. prose:** Is your writing clear, grammatical, properly punctuated and without spelling errors?
- 6. organisation of the material:** Have you presented your material (argument and evidence) clearly, and does it make sense as a sequence?
- 7. format:** Does your essay abide by the appropriate guidelines (attached!) for such work? In particular, have you cited your sources and connected your evidence to your arguments appropriately?